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Sanapia, 1895–1968

Early Childhood

SANAPIA WAS BORN at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, in the spring of 1895 in a tepee encampment of *yapai* Comanches who had traveled to Fort Sill for rations from the vicinity of Medicine Park, Oklahoma. As with most Comanche women her age, Sanapia only knows that she was born in the spring and has therefore arbitrarily set her birth date at May twentieth.

Her father was Comanche and her mother Comanche-Arapaho. Sanapia was the sixth in a family of eleven siblings, having five older brothers, three younger brothers, and two younger sisters. As is still the custom among the more traditionally oriented Comanches, the maternal grandmother is very instrumental in rearing her daughter's children. Both Sanapia's mother and her mother's older brother were eagle doctors.

> Yeah, my mother doctored . . . she could do anything. One time it was her playmate . . one time they were playing and she died. They put her buckskin dress on her, and you know in them days when anybody died they put red paint all over their face and their arms and their feet and then they put them away. They fix her up like that. My mother was playing with the rest of the kids. She was just a little bitty girl. She said, "I'm going to my tent and go to sleep. After awhile I play some more." Later these kids came to her and said, "They want you over there. Go to doctor." And she was just about ten years old that time. She went down there and she said, "No, no, she not going to go. I don't want her to die. I'll fix her up." She told all those people that, "You all get out. I'll fix her up." And she was sitting in that tent making all kinds of racket and pretty soon that little girl get up. She came back to life and lived many years. My mother died before her.

Sanapia's maternal uncle was also very active among Comanche peyotists, leading peyote meetings throughout southern Oklahoma. Sanapia also counts among her relatives a paternal grandfather who was an important *yapai* leader in the

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115 late nineteenth century and another maternal uncle who was a twentieth-century
159 Arapaho chief. Each of these facts is individually significant for an understanding of some of the major early influences which affected Sanapia's life.

115 The recurring descriptive phrase used by my older Comanche informants
159 when speaking of Sanapia's father was, "He was a strong Christian man." His
797 conversion to Christianity occurred in his early middle years, shortly before Sanapia's birth, and, in fact, it was the Presbyterian minister responsible for the father's conversion who was given the honor of naming the new born Sanapia. Her father devoted most of his life to Christian activities among the Comanches,
115 much to the later embarrassment of Sanapia. He was also energetic in attempting
159 to learn and to incorporate into his family's routine the life style of white society.
797 Sanapia's reminiscences of her father depend for their tone and complexion on her
177 vacillating moods. At one time she may speak of him as "a good Christian man
593 and a good father," and at another time she might speak of a father who, through his white-Christian–modeled behavior, brought ridicule upon his wife and family from the Comanche community in which they lived.

> You know, he was the first Christian man among us Comanche peoples. He used to go up to Richard Spur and talk to them people up there. He talk about the bible and things like that. And you know, some of those Indians believed him, what he tells them, but some of them make fun of him and tell him that he don't know nothing about the bible, or he don't know nothing about white
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Sanapia and her parents, 1898.

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man's ways. They say, "We don't want to hear stories about white people that been dead for years . . . dead for a long time." That's what they tell him. When he prayed, some of those people, they tell him, "Who you praying to?" And he said, "Well, I pray to God because the white man told me to." And they just laugh at him. He catch them when they out of peyote meeting on Sunday mornings. Maybe he shouldn't have done that. You wouldn't catch my mother going over there with him. No!

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When Sanapia's father embraced Christianity, he turned totally from all things Comanche; at least, this is the opinion of those who knew him. A photograph of his wife and him taken in the early twentieth century shows a massive man with short hair, stiffly posing, dressed in a dark suit, dark shoes, white shirt, starched collar, and tie. Beside him stands his wife, dressed in the cloth "squaw dress," apron, sash, and buckskin moccasins, a costume commonly worn by women in the immedite postreservation period, but displaying in her attire style not one trace of the effects of the surrounding white society. This photograph dramatically

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Sanapia's maternal uncle.

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This photograph dramatically conveys the nature of a very far-reaching influence on Sanapia's life: a liberal father who attempted to incorporate into his person visible symbols of the white-Christian culture in which he found himself enveloped and an extremely conservative and traditionally oriented mother who had nothing but disdain for the symbols and values of white society. 115 159 797 177 593

Sanapia's mother seems to have been almost fanatical in her conservatism. For example, though she knew and understood English, she would never speak it in a white man's presence, feeling that somehow this would belittle her in the 115 159 177 593

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Sanapia's mother and father.

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Sanapia's mother, 1909.

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white man's eyes. Sanapia remembers this point well, for it was she, as her mother's favorite daughter, who was called upon to take her mother to the nearby towns and act as interpreter. 115 159 177 593 191

Lots of times I would be playing or something and I have to go with her . . . speak for her. I tell her, "You can talk English good, why do I have to talk for you?" She just tell me to come on. She said that when the white mans learn Comanche talk, she would learn white man language. She was real stubborn, I guess you would say, about things like that. You know, one time my father put these little napkin rings like they used at school on our table and he told us kids to use them. Well, my mother got them and put bead work on them with each our name on each one. My father got mad at that, but my mother told him that she wasn't no white man, she was Indian. They would talk like that a lot but they stay together till they both dead. They have some run-ins though. Like once I come back from school with these button-top shoes. My mother made me take them off because she said they would cripple my feet. My grandmother told me that too. But my father liked them and made me wear them. I thought they looked good, you know, but they hurt if you wear them long enough. I go barefoot a lot when I was a real young woman. 115 159 177 593

According to Sanapia's memory, her father never took issue with the mother's doctoring activities or her involvement with the peyotists. From Sanapia's stories of childhood it seems that it was the mother who would react violently against the father's attempt to introduce elements of white culture into the home. The father apparently never directly attacked the conservative Comanche ways but preferred to ignore them, withdraw from them, or illustrate how the white man's "road" was superior.

Sanapia's memories of her maternal grandmother are the fondest and most elaborated. It was this grandmother who took the greatest hand in rearing the children, though the father and mother acted as final authorities. It was also this grandmother who continually emphasized to Sanapia the importance of remembering the old ways and old stories, even suggesting that she keep a diary or journal of her life. 115 159 603 177

My grandmother was just a little bitty woman. She stayed in her tepee south of the house because she didn't like houses. She said that they good for keeping dogs and horses and that's all. A lot of old peoples would used to joke like that. She sure was good to me . . . take care of me all the time when I was just a small girl. She wrap me in her blanket when I was little, even when I get to be five years old . . . pretty big girl by then . . . and she carry me around. She said, "I want you to save your feet, don't let your legs get tired because you got a long time to live." She carry me around down on the creek, doing nothing, until I get tired and then she take me back to her tent. She rocks me to sleep and if I wake up way in the night, she would give me a meat ball . . . pound meat with sugar on it. Then she poke up the fire and tell me old stories. She told me how to make real old time Indian bags out of this softest buckskin so I could carry around my own little meat balls in there. Bag looks like a flat bag sort of is the kind of one I had. She tell me always to remember what she tells me and I did. She tell me that I should write it down, but at that time I didn't even know what writing is, but my grandma did. She tell me that a lot of white people would come into our country. That was even before I seen a lot of white [342] 115 159 603 855 [252] [415]

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115 159 603 855 [765] people like now. I remember that when I was small I watched long bunch of white peoples come in here and up to today that's almost all there is around here. In them days, no fences and no white people. And my grandmother knew that before it happened. She know lot of things like that too. And when what she says happens I was sure surprised, but it made me believe her better. She had a big hunk out of her ear. She cut her ear up when her brother died in the war . . . to show how sorry she was, but I didn't know that and I would joke her and tell her, "What's the matter with your ear? Did a mule bite it off?" She would tell me what happened to it. I would ask her all sorts of things and she would always tell me something on it. She's the one who told me to take my mother's doctoring-way when I was getting older. I didn't want it because I thought it was silly or nasty, but my grandmother said that soon in the future there wouldn't be hardly any Indian doctors left and she sure was right on that. I really cried when she pass on, because she had been so good to me, bringing me along like she did. So now, up to today, my daughters got kids and my son. I try to be like my grandma. I tell them old ways that I can remember, but, you know, they don't hardly care for it. They getting to be more like white peoples every year that pass. My grandmother told me all this would happen too.

115 159 604 756 755 Sanapia's maternal uncle, an eagle doctor like her mother, was very active among peyotists in southern Oklahoma. Her first recollections of peyote meetings were those which were directed by her uncle, and it was through him that Sanapia later learned the manifold uses of peyote as a medicine. Her mother also utilized peyote as a medicine, though not to the extent to which her uncle employed it. Sanapia's paternal grandfather was also a "strong peyote man." Thus early in life Sanapia was impressed with the importance of peyote by two very influential family members.

Religious Influences

115 159 771 Sanapia was reared in an atmosphere colored by three basic approaches to supernaturalistic realms—the Christianity of her father, the peyotism of her uncle and paternal grandfather, and the more customary Plains pattern of vision quests and guardian spirits as embodied by her mother, the eagle doctor. Through this liberal education she learned the basic tenets of each and managed to syncretically combine elements of all three into the validating and supportive unity by which she now lives and finds the rationalization for her own supernatural prerogative as a Medicine woman.

She quite naturally deemphasizes the differences and emphasizes the similarities in these three supernaturalistic systems. She is very fond of making comments like the following:

115 159 771 755 You know, the bible says that when Jesus was on earth he would heal people. His disciples had that same power as Him, and I know I'm just like them. I got power in my hands to heal peoples too. You can read the bible to find out that Jesus gives those people power to help people that got sickness, and it's just like that with me. When I pray, I feel just like, well, the Lord says, "You go heal that person. I give you power to do that and give you a good mind . . . put power in your hands. When you touch anybody like that, you'll get them well." That's what I always thought, you know. Use the bible like that.

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She speaks similarly of peyote:

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That peyote is a real good medicine. They call it . . . some of the Indians call it a sacrament like white peoples who are Christians. God gave that peyote to the Indians to help them when they got sickness. I learned how to use that peyote a lot of ways. You ain't supposed to take it and think you go crazy. No! It's a medicine and that's the way I use it. Peyote gives me power to make people well.

When speaking of her supernatural patron, the eagle, she says:

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The eagle got more power then anything living, I guess. Its got Medicine to help people get well . . . to cure them. I got power like that eagle because the eagle help me when I call on it when I doctor. My mother told me that I be just like that eagle when I doctor. I can feel the eagle working in me when I doctor and try hard to get somebody well. Feels like that eagle tell me in my mind to go ahead and fix that person up . . . get him well.

However, though she utilizes elements of peyotism and Christianity, she has little sympathy for the organized forms of these religions. This is especially true with regard to Christianity.

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The way I know is, when I went to Christian church up there, many, many years back I found out some things. Like when you get hard up, or when you get sick in the family, they ain't going to help you. They don't come. They don't say, "Let's have a prayer meeting for you. Let's do that." They don't say that to you. They really tight. They don't spare nothing with you. I still pray like that, but I'm not going to their church for nothing.

She speaks of the Native American Church:

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They say I supposed to sign my name to belong to that Native Church. I told them that I wasn't going to do that. I been using that medicine for long as I know it, and my mother before me, and her father before her and way, way back like that. I don't have to belong to nothing to use that medicine. We hold meetings here on our place but I ain't going nowhere else around here to peyote meeting. That medicine belong to anybody that needs it and you don't have to belong to the church that they set up if you want to use it.

White Contact

Sanapia's first extensive contact with white society came when she began her schooling at the age of seven at Cache Creek Mission School in southern Oklahoma. She remembers the seven years she spent at Cache Creek as generally pleasant.

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I really did enjoy that school. I like it. The teachers . . . every one of them and our superintendent were all missionaries. They were really nice people. They teach us the bible. All the girls and boys go up there and they teach us all these bible stories and they question us out of the bible to see if we really read it.

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115 They teach us the men. We all sitting around there. When she tell us how
159 Jesus was born, we just laugh and act silly and our matron would say, "Don't
177 laugh." Then we ask her, "Did you see the baby?" You know, things like that
797 . . . the older girls and us ask her questions like that. We just laugh about it.
872 All the time we thought it was silly for them not to go and see the baby when
[212] it was born. Yeah, we learn how to write and learn how to spell, and arithmetic and whatever they learn us. We caught onto it. Then the government wrote a letter to our superintendent and said to send a bunch of them to Haskell in Kansas. And they sent a bunch of them over there and they went to school up there for about three years and they come back and they were grown and they all got married, but I didn't go. My mother wouldn't sign the papers and my dad wouldn't let me go. "No, we don't want her to go up there. She might run off or she'll freeze to death or somebody might kill her on the road." So a bunch of us girls, we didn't go. And a bunch of them went. My brothers went. They were younger than I and they went. And my mother said, "No, she's not going, but you boys could go. Boys are tougher than the girls." That what she told my brothers and so they went. I didn't care nothing about it either way.

During the summer vacations she would return to her home, which at that time was situated along Chandler Creek in Comanche County, Oklahoma.

I never did go places because we didn't have no places to go in them days . . . no cars or nothing. When we come out of school we just stay home all summer.
115 Help my father with the work and everything he's got. He had lots of crops. My
159 brothers cultivate that corn. I have to ride the horse for them and keep it on
241 the row because the corn was so high that the horse would keep eating back and forth and my father would make me ride that horse to keep him on that line so he won't be eating the tops of the corn. They take turns, three of my brothers, while I be riding that horse all day, all day. In the morning we go plow till noon and then we go to dinner and then we go back and plow again till we get through with it. My father used to teach us to work, you know.

115 It was during summer vacation prior to her last year at school that Sanapia's
159 mother offered to train her to become a doctor. Sanapia was reticent at first, but
593 combined pressure from her mother and maternal grandmother persuaded her to
756 at least consent to the first phases of this training program, that of learning to
868 identify in their natural habitat the various floral medicines which her mother
824 used in doctoring.

The Middle Years

115 Sanapia left school when she was fourteen years old, and her activities
159 for the next three years were in the main involved with the training program her
756 mother and uncle had established to teach Sanapia all she would need to know to
868 become an eagle doctor. By her seventeenth year Sanapia had successfully com-
[871] pleted her training and possessed all the skills, knowledge, and supernatural powers
[582] which she would employ in doctoring after she passed menopause. During the period of training her mother had dissuaded her from marriage so that she would

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be able to give her full attention to learning the skills of the eagle doctor. Much of this dissuasive effort was also aimed at Sanapia's older brother since it was the brother who had the prerogative of giving his sister away in marriage. However, after her training both the mother and the older brother immediately joined in a combined effort to find Sanapia a good husband.

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Sanapia, age 16 (left) and her young sister (right). Taken in Lawton, Oklahoma, 1912.

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115 159 584 Well, my brother was chumming around with this young boy. He was about nineteen and he went to Fort Sill School. And my brother, he go down there and come home with him sometimes. Finally, that summer when school was out, he brought that young man home with him and he stayed with us all summer. My mother said, "You better get married to this boy. He's a nice boy. He always helping with everything, and he might work for us if you get married to him." I didn't have no sense enough to . . . I mean I don't think about love, or anything like that. So I said, "If he wants to marry me, I marry him." So my mother said, "Do you want to marry my daughter?" and he said, "Yeah, I'll marry her." And that's the way I got married. They just give their kids away like that. If you ask anybody, "Do you want to marry my daughter?" They say, "Yeah." That's your husband . . . just like that.

115 159 Sanapia had one son, and shortly after his birth she left her first husband at the urging of her mother. She married again within a year and remained married to her second husband until his death in the early 1930s. She had a son and a daughter by her second husband. Following the death of her second husband, 115 159 Sanapia's life took on a tone which is recalled most vividly by those who wish to 154 discredit her. During this time her violent bursts of temper, excessive drinking, 763 sexual promiscuity, and zest for gambling won for her a notoriety which has 543 never entirely left her. She talks of those years as "the time I was roughing it out."

Sanapia's second husband was apparently her favorite. He is also the only one of her spouses which she refers to as "husband." She was emotionally very ravaged by his death. It is interesting that the more tradition-oriented informants will mention Sanapia's misbehavior after his death but add no note of blame, simply emphasizing her grief. Kardiner (1945:77) makes the following statement, when discussing a Comanche woman's behavior after the death of her child. Perhaps the reaction to the death of a loved husband could correspond to the same pattern.

> After the death of a child a young woman who had previously been entirely respectable would become exceedingly active sexually and would have a whole series of affairs. This behavior, which sometimes lasted two or three years, was recognized as a sort of psychotic state and did not result in the same sort of difficulties that accompanied elopement or break-up of a marriage. The husband would feel sorry and would wait until she recovered and then resume the regular marriage relationship.

115 159 756 It was during the years when Sanapia was "roughing it out" that she first attempted to employ her doctoring skills. She was approached by a sister who wished Sanapia to doctor her sick child.

> She came to visit me one day when I was around here. She rolled a smoke with that Bull Durham and handed it to me, and I took it. I didn't even think what she was here for, but then I knew. She ask me to doctor her sick baby. I got so nervous I just start to shake all over and I told her to go away because I was feeling shame, I guess. Then I start to think what my mother told me, how I couldn't refuse nobody, so I went with her. I kept thinking that I couldn't do no good, but you know, I got that baby well. I thought that was some kind of sign, so I thought that I might try to make something out of this doctoring.

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Some years later Sanapia married again, and many of my informants say that it was at this time that Sanapia abruptly ceased the behavior which had caused her so much notoriety. This was also the period during which Sanapia earnestly began her career as a doctor. Every account of cases which Sanapia treated stems from a time no later than 1945. 115 159 756

Sanapia and her present spouse have traveled extensively in the western United States. Their route always corresponds to areas of Indian population density. In the following, Sanapia recounts her first excursion to Wyoming. 115 159 484

> We went to New Mexico and to Las Vegas. We went over there. We just went, you know. We don't know where we going but we just went that way. Came to Navajos, Pueblos, and we visit among them and we stop at Las Vegas. Mind you, at that time I sure like to gamble. And so I went over there and start gambling. J——— [Sanapia's husband] said, "You better quit. We long way from home." And I just said, "As long as we stay here I'm going to gamble. If we lose anything, I win it back." Wanted him to get me some money. And so we stayed about ten days and then we went on. We went to Wyoming. They, the Shoshones, live in a reservation at Fort Washington, north from Lander, . . . town of that name, I think. Maybe something else. They live close together to one another, you know, not like us. We live so many miles from each other. They don't work, they don't do nothing. Just all day long they drum and sing and dance and every day something is going on and gambling is the biggest part of it. Well, when we first got over to Wyoming, that afternoon, we ask where are the Shoshone peoples. We was right there among them and we didn't even know it. We went into a big building, you know . . . it was their community building or something like a club or something like that. We went in. It was full of Indians. They was sitting around in groups around the floor. And there was blankets and they was sitting on it. And then we stand there and look at them and they was gambling . . . playing Mexican monte. And so I wanted to find out what my grandmather had told me so I went up and listen and when they talk about us. We didn't talk. We just be standing there. And they said "These are some kind of Indians, maybe Mexicans. They sure look like Mexicans." They said that. And we said, "We not Mexicans," . . . in Indian. And they look at one another and said, "Do you all talk like us?" and we said, "Yeah, we talk like you all." I said, "We your ancestors. That where we come from." So that evening they invite us to their homes . . . this whole group of people and that night we have group of Indians there. They were all talking to us . . . finding out where we live and where we come from and all that. And I told them, "You are the people that my grandmother told me about." And I told them about that big sickness what the Indians caught, and then I said, "You all got that and then you scattered. You belong to our tribe. That's what my grandmother told me." And they were surprised, you know.

Training to Become a Doctor

Sanapia recalls the four years of training to become a doctor as the most important years of her life. It is to those years that Sanapia owes the prestige which she enjoys today among the northern Comanches. As a doctor, she holds a status in her society equal to a man. She is at the zenith of traditionally defined prestige and social power acquirable by a woman in Comanche society. 115 159 756 562 559

The first phase of Sanapia's training began in the summer before her last 115 159 756

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115 year of school. This first phase consisted of lessons in identifying certain medicine
159 plants in the field and in the avenues of acquisition of medicines which were not
756 native to southern Oklahoma. Sanapia was also taught the rituals involved in the
[824] collection of certain plants and the various manners of rendering raw plant parts into
[278] manipulatable medicine. Concomitantly, she was instructed in the skills of administering medicines.

The first phase initiated Sanapia's training period and continued throughout the next three years. Sanapia was next instructed in the diagnosing of all manner of human afflictions and their proper treatment. During this time she served as an aid to her mother and maternal uncle in their doctoring activities and thus was able to observe the actual treatment of patients as well as the required deportment of a doctor and his patient. However, knowledge of ethics and required role behavior of a doctor was not left to Sanapia's youthful observations alone. She remembers "long, long talks" when her mother and uncle would impress on her the proper behavior of a doctor.

115 These rules of conduct, in the way in which they deemphasize the signifi-
159 cance of the individual and emphasize the supernatural powers operating through
756 him, seem to have a distinctly Judao-Christian cast to them and appear to be some-
177 what counter to the more individual-oriented supernaturalistic notions recorded for the Comanches of an earlier time. Perhaps Sanapia, in her attempt to construct a unified religious structure from the three disparate supernaturalistic systems into which she was born, has slightly modified the tenor of the eagle doctor ethics and their premises, as taught by her mother and maternal uncle, to make them more compatible with other elements in her own personal syncretic supernaturalistic complex. It is highly doubtful that her mother, with her aversion to Christianity, would have so sensitively and systematically performed this feat.

Deportment of a Doctor

115 Most importantly, the doctor must lead a good and honorable life. The
159 Medicine demands this, and it would do harm to the individual possessing
756 it if he acted in a manner unbecoming a *puhakut*. Sanapia suggests that a *puhakut*
[761] and his Medicine are one. If a possessor of power, through his untoward behavior, brings disgrace on himself, he also brings disgrace on his Medicine, and as punishment his power could cause his death.

The doctor must also be always accessible. He cannot refuse anyone his services. Sanapia conceptualizes herself, in the role of eagle doctor, as the medium through which the Medicine operates. She "possesses" Medicine only in this sense, and, once she has committed herself to the life of a *puhakut*, it is no longer her decision as to who may or may not benefit from a supernatural power acting through her which can alleviate human suffering.

An eagle doctor must never extol his own abilities and should also dissuade others from doing so. Once again, Sanapia interprets this as a further means by which the doctor recognizes that it is not the doctor but the Medicine with which he has been gifted, which is responsible for the good works which are accomplished by him.

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A doctor should never suggest that he could cure an individual but must wait for the individual to approach him. Again Sanapia states that a violation of this norm would be an indication on the part of the doctor that he, and only secondarily his Medicine, is the important element in the potential curing.

A doctor must be paid for any services he renders, no matter how slight. Similarly, a doctor cannot work his Medicine without payment. In the case of an eagle doctor, this applies even to family members. In addition, the payment, with the exception of certain relatively inexpensive ritual items (green cloth and tobacco) required at the first interview of doctor and patient, must be left to the discretion of the patient. A doctor cannot refuse anything which is offered in payment. Furthermore, Sanapia was instructed that she must immediately give away a portion of her final payment to anyone in her immediate vicinity at the time of payment. This "give away" is a means by which Sanapia honors her Medicine.

> And one thing, when they come to me . . . anybody comes to me and say, "I want you to doctor me," bring plain goods, no figure or nothing. Dark green goods. They have to take that and smoke and they going to give me that green goods. Either a yard or two or three or four yards like that. That's the only thing I ask for. And they say, "Now what else we going to pay you when you get this boy, this girl, this woman, this man well?" I say, "That's what I call for . . . just the green goods. And if he gets well or she gets well, its up to you. If you think I get that person well, its up to you." But I'm not going to say I want this and that and that and I want so much money. I'm not going to say that because that's what my mother told me. She said, "Don't you ever ask for anything. Its going to be given to you. I don't care what anybody says, its going to come to you." Now, up to today, when anybody give to me . . . give me blanket or any kind of goods . . . I ain't supposed to keep it. It be like somebody come here and I doctor them and they get well and they come in and pile things up here for me and those girls are out there. I call them and say, "Here, you all. Take you choice out of this." And whatever they leave, that's mine. And that's the way I get all my things today and that was my mother's words . . . what she told me to do.

Origin of Eagle Doctors

It was also during this period of training that Sanapia was told the origin story of the Comanche eagle doctors.

> Way back in years there used to be an old woman who was pretty poor. She had a grandson she tried her best to take care of because all her children were gone and all that was left was this grandson. When them people moved their camps, she used to trail behind them. When they set up another camp, the old woman would camp right outside on the edge of that camp place. Sometimes people, 'mens, brought them food, meat, you know. But most times they were poor and hungry. And it went on and went on till one time they were all down south and west among them Navajo and Pueblo peoples. They was all trading each other. Meat and blankets for corn and meal and things. One Comanche young man got a whole pile of that corn meal and brought it to the old woman. That's the only way they could get that stuff them days. The grandson was happy over that, you know, over that young man bringing those things and helping

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them out. Well, later on the grandmother was cooking that corn and her grandson wanted some. The woman said, "No, I can't get any right this minute. I'm too busy to mess with you." Her grandson asked again but he got that same answer. He ask four times until he just fell over backwards and started crying and hollering real loud. Then he told his grandmother that he was going to be an eagle and leave her. Sure enough, he started growing wings on his shoulders. The grandmother thought he was joking, but soon and soon he had wings. When the old woman saw that she start to cry but the boy said, "No, you been stingy and I'm going to go . . . going to leave you all." The grandmother was crying and beggin' him not to go and soon a bunch of people came around her tepee. She ran out and told them what was happening but they didn't do nothing. I guess they thought she was crazy. But then, all at once, the boy came out and flapped his eagle wings and flew up and up. He went over them four times. He told them, "I'm leaving because that old woman was stingy with me." Then he took a feather from his tail and dropped it and it came down real slow, this way and that way, back and forth and back and forth. Then he said, "I'm going to leave you people this thing. Whoever gets that feather when it lands will have my help when ever he or she needs it to help some other people." And don't you know, the first person to get that feather was just a little girl. She was the first one what had that eagle's power like he said.

Consent of the Teachers

During the four years of her training Sanapia was closely observed by four individuals—her mother, maternal uncle, maternal grandmother, and paternal grandfather. Each had to give approval, by means of a blessing ceremony, before Sanapia's mother could complete the last phase of the training, the actual transmission of her supernatural powers. Sanapia's mother could usurp the prerogative of the other three mentors; however, this would be considered a serious breach of etiquette and proper procedure. It would also tend to make Sanapia suspect as a witch since it would be known, by broadcast of the three slighted mentors, that there was no way to know for certain that Sanapia had truly learned to use her powers in the proper manner. Ideally, each of the four individuals would act as Sanapia's adviser and teacher; though it would be the mother and maternal uncle, in Sanapia's case, who would be solely responsible for instruction in the skills of doctoring, while the maternal grandmother and paternal grandfather would dwell upon instilling in her a proper system of values, morals, and ethics.

The notion that supernatural power is potentially dangerous for group welfare will appear repeatedly in the following discussion. This belief seems to be the basis for the four-man "review board" in Sanapia's training. A *puhakut* can do great good for his people, but he is also capable of tremendous evil. By a series of checks by the four advisers, the potential of evil tendencies in a training Medicine possessor can be more readily detected. If the one who will do the actual transmission of power overrides the other three mentors, at least the community can be warned of this; that is, the new *puhakut*, because of his lack of ethical training, may use his powers for evil.

Sanapia's maternal grandmother was the first one to bless her, thus giving her approval to Sanapia's becoming a doctor. The paternal grandfather's blessing

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ceremony was similar, in its essentials, to the following description given by Sanapia of the blessing by her grandmother: 115 159 756 603

> One morning she told my mother, "This morning I'm going to bless my granddaughter. I want to fix it. I want my son to go out there and build a fire and when it turns to coals he could bring me some." And she had a little iron bucket, you know, and she said, "Put that big coal in this iron and bring it into my tepee. I want to bless her so she could live a long time and help people. And then she going to have children. And whatever she wants, anything at all, she's going to get it . . . easy way . . . she won't have to work, she won't have to do nothing." That's what she said, and then she blessed me. I was pretty good size, about fourteen I guess. She blessed me with all what she said and then she put cedar on them coals and she pray and sing. Then she put her hand on my head and I inhale that cedar and she fan it on my legs and arms, all over my body. She would sing a song and then she prayed some more. And you know, in them days I never did know how they prayed, but she would pray and she said, "You, I don't know what you are, but I want you to bless this little girl so she can grow up and live to be an old lady like me. You, the one who go in the night and watch people, I don't know who you are, but you're like that, bless her. And this earth, I want her to walk on you for many, many years. I want her to be strong and healthy and I want her to live many years." And after she got through, she took that red paint and put water in it and rubbed it like that. Just smeared it all on my face, and rubbed it from my knees down to the bottom of my feet. Then she said, "Now, she's going to stand on this earth. This paint comes from the earth and she's going to stand on it. And she's going to live long life after she gets old. Help peoples. And when she gets real old, and her hair turns gray and white and her teeth fall out, well, that's when she's going to die." That's what she told me.

In the early 1900s a flu epidemic struck the Comanches. Sanapia was afflicted, and her maternal uncle was summoned to treat her. It was during this treatment that the uncle gave his consent by including phrasing in his standard blessing ceremony at the termination of treatment which meant that Sanapia would regain her health only if she would devote her life to the profession of doctoring. Frightened by this bit of "blackmail," Sanapia promised that she would always strive to be a good woman and a good doctor. As a symbol of her promise, the uncle gave her a new name, "Memory Woman," signifying that Sanapia should never forget the oath made to her uncle as a condition for her regained health. 115 159 756 604 164

The next to give consent was the grandfather, but the final and most crucial consent needed was that of the mother. It was given early in the last year of training. With the mother's blessing--consent, the actual transfer of power began. This transference of supernatural power from the mother would progress through four stages, culminating in Sanapia's four days and nights of solitary meditation. The four-day ordeal, or vision quest, signals the termination of training, for it is at this time that the neophyte eagle doctor's power is tested during the period of solitary meditation as the ghosts converge on him in an attempt to frighten and harass him to the point that he will renounce his Medicine. In other words, even with the consent of the teacher and the three advisers, the actual fait accompli is ultimately the outcome of a kind of mystical combat between the 115 159 756 593 603 115 159 756 775

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115 malevolent spirits of the dead and the Medicine of the potential eagle doctor.
159 Kardiner's (1945:93) observation that, among the Comanche, "Medicine" is
756 merely a euphemism for "courage" is pertinent, for the ghost's major weapon
775 against the neophyte doctor is fear. It is interesting that although the behavior
[171] engaged in during these four days and nights of solitude is similar to the general pattern of Plains vision questing, Sanapia conceives of this time as merely a final test and not a time when a supernatural patron could have possibly appeared
[825] to her and granted her certain supernatural prerogatives. The apparition of her
[787] patron, the eagle, would come later in her career as a doctor. In the beginning of
[778] her doctoring career, the powers which she possessed came strictly from a personal power transmission from her mother and uncle to her. Sanapia feels that visitations from either the eagle, or at times from the spirits of her mother and uncle, are gifts granted her as a reward for her faith and conscientious endeavors as a doctor.

Power Transmission

115 The first stage in the actual power transmission from the mother was
159 concerned with instilling power into Sanapia's mouth and hands, the areas of
756 the body where an eagle doctor's powers are most strongly represented. The rituals
[826] involved with this first phase of transmission are very similar to the blessing ceremony, at least in the introductory stages. Sanapia's brother was told by the mother to lay a fire of pecan wood. After the wood burned to coals, the brother
[823] brought the coals to a secluded place where Sanapia and her mother waited. The mother sat facing east, and Sanapia was instructed to sit facing her, while the mound of coals burned between them. Sanapia was cedared[1] and fanned by her
[533] mother with the standard blessings of long life and good health. This blessing also included the mother's singing of her Medicine song, an action which serves
115 to call the *puhakut*'s power sources to his service. The mother, using her bare
159 hand, then plucked a live coal from the mound of embers and handed it to Sanapia.
756 At first, Sanapia reports, she balked at placing the burning coal in her hand, but at
787 her mother's insistence she took it and was amazed that it did not burn her. She was then instructed to rub the coal over her hands. Once again the similarity in the concepts of "Medicine" and "courage" appear. Today, Sanapia interprets the handling of live coals as an act of faith in the doctor, a necessary first step in testing the potential doctor's resolve.

> I was sure scared then . . . almost got up and ran away. I was only a young girl at that time, you know. But, when I took them coals on my hand, inside and outside my hand I felt a chill, maybe. Oh, it was like chills in my hands. That has the meaning that power was in there . . . working in my hands. Felt like it would go up my arm even.

[1] The dried leaves of the red cedar are sprinkled on live coals, and the rising smoke is wafted over the person who is being blessed.

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After Sanapia had taken the coal and covered her hands with the ashes, her mother began the transmission of supernatural power to Sanapia's mouth. Two eagle feathers, manipulated by the mother, were drawn across Sanapia's opened mouth four times; however, in the course of the fourth movement of the feathers, one of the feathers disappeared. At this occurrence Sanapia's mother told her that the eagle feather had entered her mouth and would dwell there for the rest of her life. 115 159 756 789

As with a similar phenomenon occurring in a variety of witchcraft which will be discussed in Chapter 5, Sanapia states that she does not believe that an eagle feather actually was inserted into her mouth but rather that the idea, the essence, or the Medicine which the eagle feather symbolized, was the entity which was placed in her mouth. She does not attempt to explain the disappearance of the second feather from her mother's hand except to suggest that her mother possessed certain powers which she did not transmit to Sanapia. This first phase was ended with the mother's application of red paint to Sanapia's face, forearms, and legs, from the knees to, and including, the soles of the feet.

Two tabus, or "rules" as Sanapia calls them, were attached by the mother to the powers transmitted in this first phase of the actual transmission. Sanapia was forbidden to eat any kind of fowl. Her mother warned that if she broke that rule, the feather in her throat would kill her. The second tabu forbade Sanapia to allow people to pass behind her carrying food, especially meat, while she is eating. 115 159 756 784 262 264

> That eagle, when he eats, he don't like anybody to be behind him. When its sitting on the ground, and it see anybody behind him, it twist all around and sit toward you. If he back there eating meat, he don't want any meat behind him. If some kid carry meat on a plate, it just give me chills all at once . . . you know, if they be behind me. I don't care if I don't see it, if there's meat on that plate behind me I get chills, and I know someone back there. My mother said, "If you keep it like that and try to take care of yourself, it won't make you loose your ways about it. That's going to be the rule I give you. You got to do that. Don't let anybody go behind you when you eat, especially if they carrying meat."

It is impossible to say if certain kinds of power or specific supernatural abilities to achieve a certain exclusive end were transmitted at each of the four stages of transmission. From Sanapia's discussion it can be said that each stage marked an increase in the degree of power generally. Before the beginning of the actual power transmission Sanapia was taught the ritual procedure which she would require as a doctor. The four stages of transmission acted to instill in her ever-increasing powers to successfully actualize the goals of these doctoring procedures. 115 159 756

An analogy can be made with the construction of an automobile. Before it is actually energized, it is equipped with everything that it will require to efficiently operate. Then, at the source of manufacture, it is carefully observed while given several rigidly controlled and graded performance tests. Supernatural power, like an untested automobile, is potentially dangerous to the operator. This appears to

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be the rationale for the transmission of power in stages, each stage being interrupted by a certain length of time in which the effects of the preceding stage on the recipient can be observed. Sanapia was not entirely sure how a negative reaction to a transmission of supernatural power would manifest itself. She suggested death or insanity as two possibilities.

For the several months following the first stage of transmission, Sanapia was closely observed by her mother and her maternal uncle, who at this time entered into Sanapia's training program, instructing her in the many medicinal uses of peyote. If any ill effects from the first transmission had occurred in Sanapia, her mother would have immediately terminated Sanapia's program and acted to remove the power which she had given her up to that point. Sanapia's total immersion in running water would have been a core theme of such a desacralizing ritual. Since no negative reactions appeared in Sanapia, her mother initiated the second stage of transmission.

All the power transmission ceremonies are generally similar in that they are based on the blessing ceremony of the eagle doctor, which employs cedar, eagle feathers, Medicine song, and red paint. The unique feature of the second transmission was the mother's magical insertion of an "eagle egg" into Sanapia's stomach. An increase in eagle traits indicates an increase in eagle power. To Sanapia the logical pivot of the egg insertion in this second stage of transmission is clear: "Female eagles have eggs inside them." As with the case of the eagle feather in the first transmission ceremony, Sanapia feels that it was the essence or the idea of the egg which entered her. Similarly, she cannot explain how the egg disappeared from her mother's hand prior to the egg's insertion in her stomach.

Tabus

The tabu connected with this second power increase forbids Sanapia to eat eggs. It can be seen that each stage of power increase is signaled by the neophyte eagle doctor's acquisition of symbolic elements which are to a great degree intertwined with the nature of the accompanying tabus. As the power increases, the potential dangers to the *puhakut* increase as his behavior is more tightly bound by tabus, the breaking of which would lead to personal disaster. From Sanapia's accounts, *the puhakuts*, at least of her time, possessed a way to escape the tabu burdens of their powers if they wished. As Sanapia grew older, she began to acquire a craving for eggs. In order to satisfy this hunger, without risking the dangers of breaking her "rule," she commissioned an eagle doctor to extract the egg from her, and thus dismiss the tabu against the consumption of eggs. Of course, by having this done she also lost the quantity of supernatural power which accompanies the eagle egg. It is interesting to note that though the tabu was removed, Sanapia is now physically unable to eat eggs.

> Up to today, I just can't eat eggs. When I eat it I feel like it just set there and it won't go in. I don't know why. I thought I would be able to eat eggs. When I was small my mother won't let me eat eggs because I already had one and she don't want me to eat eggs. But after she pass away and I start eating

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eggs, but it always feel like I'm choking in here and I just quit eating them. And now I can't get the taste out of my mouth. I'll have it all day long. I just can't eat them.

Sanapia's maternal uncle gave her but one "rule." She was forbidden to eat the visceral organs of animals. This was a bitter pill for Sanapia because of her love for liver and an Indian delicacy made from stuffed intestines. She has managed to circumvent this tabu by reinterpreting it. Sanapia feels that if she changes these forbidden meats into something else, disguises them, she can eat them with no fear or guilt.

A *puhakut* cannot doctor himself in the manner which was described regarding the removal of the eagle egg. This is unfortunate for Sanapia, for as she grows older, the tabus which she must observe become increasingly cumbersome; and since she is the only living eagle doctor, she has no way in which to relieve herself of these restrictions. This is also a reason for her disinclination to associate with the less traditionally based members of the Comanche tribe. The more conservative and traditional Comanches recognizing the special limitations which are placed on Sanapia's behavior and, honoring them, make her life a little less complicated. With the less traditionally oriented, Sanapia cannot be sure that they understand the meaning of her tabus, and thus she must be constantly on guard around them lest they pass behind her while she is eating, for example, and unknowingly, or perhaps knowingly, cause her to break one of the many restrictions placed on her with regards to food and behavior. Sanapia states that ignorance is no excuse when a "rule" is broken. Her tabus are mechanical.

The unique feature in the third power transmission was Sanapia's acquisition of her Medicine song. The Medicine song is Sanapia's most direct means of communication to the supernatural realms which are the ultimate sources of her power. The song belonged to both the mother and the uncle. Sanapia considers her Medicine song extremely potent and utilizes it only under the most critical and pressing of doctoring situations. It is not a common element in her doctoring activities but is only employed when she feels that all her other tactics are failing. The song is her ultimate doctoring tool in that it is as close as she comes to actually commanding her power sources to heed her wishes.

The immediate result of her Medicine song is the summoning of the spirits of her mother and uncle. She then asks them for support in her attempts to reach more deeply into the supernaturalistic realms for more power and control over the situation which is challenging her.

When my mother gave me that song she told me, "When you come by yourself like that, when you don't have no place to go for help, when you got no one to lean on for help, sing this song. What you want, you going to get. I'll be listening to you. When you sing this song, I'm going to hear you singing and I'm going to help you."

Two tabus concerned with behavior were associated with the power increase of this third stage. Sanapia was forbidden to ever directly make a request of another. Her powers would, according to her mother, allow her to obtain anything

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she desired simply by wishing for it. Sanapia evades the strictures of this tabu by circumlocutions when her daily routine dictates that she must ask an individual for some object or assistance.

The second "rule" which she acquired at this stage required that she must always be alone when she doctors. Once again, Sanapia views this as a recognition of the potential dangers which excessive supernatural powers possess for humans. The only individuals who could possibly be with her while she doctors are other eagle doctors or persons who Sanapia feels have Medicine which would protect them against the dangers of supernatural contamination.

Kardiner (1945:64) makes a comment relevant at this point when writing on the subject of Comanche notions of power and magic.

> Another interesting point in connection with power, probably unique with the Comanches, is that power might be obtained from the ghosts of medicine men. This was obtained through sleeping by the grave of the medicine man, not moving all night, no matter what terrifying thing happened. The ghost would then transfer the power asked for. Sometimes the sleeper would have a vision; in this the ghost did not come in human form but as a great wind and then a giant bird, which conveyed to him the power that he wanted.

Sanapia's discussion of the later stages of her training agrees with Kardiner's statement in general; however, some major divergences appear. Sanapia, through her Medicine song, is able to summon the spirits of her mother and uncle to her aid. She does not consider their appearance as the apparition of ghosts, however. To Sanapia, ghosts are totally evil entities. Ghosts are also unable to appear in human form since, in her opinion, their human forms decomposed at the place of their interment. Her mother and uncle appear to her looking exactly as they did during the time of her training. When they appear, they do not speak but rather employ hand signs to tell Sanapia that they have come to her aid.

She does not mention a Medicine man's grave as the location of the inevitable struggle with the ghosts, and she definitely does not feel that power is transmitted to her from ghosts. She does agree generally with Kardiner's mention of a "giant bird" as one of her power sources, though she does not believe that the Medicine bird is actually a ghost in another form.

In reiteration, Sanapia states that she received her initial powers through her mother and maternal uncle, and only later in her life was she honored with visitations by the eagle, her patron and guardian spirit. The four days and nights of seclusion and meditation, in her opinion, are in actuality a final test of a new doctor's ability to withstand the attacks of ghosts, and not a time when he is in a position to acquire further powers from a supernatural patron.

Final Test

Sanapia failed her final test. After her mother had explained to her what she could expect during her four-day ordeal, Sanapia was too frightened to go through with the vigil. She would spend the daylight hours sitting on the hill

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to which her mother had sent her, and at dusk she would creep back to her house and pass the night under the front porch. In the morning she would go back to the hill before the household had awakened. Her mother and uncle never knew about this deception. However, Sanapia believes that the great amount of sickness and misfortune experienced as a young woman can be attributed to her cowardly conduct during this last phase of her training.

> Before, you have to go and fast four days, before they give you that Medicine. Maybe take a little water. You suppose to go up there on that hill and sleep up there by yourself. You suppose to pray and cry and talk. My mother say, "Somebody will come to you way in the night . . . in the middle of the night. They going to push you and kick you and they do things like that, but don't get scared. They going to kick you around and slap you. They fighting you for your Medicine." That's what they told me. But me, I was afraid to sleep up there in them mountains by myself. I didn't want to go out. I go up there and come back. Nobody come to me . . . or nothing.

Before appearing at her home on the morning of the fifth day, Sanapia bathed in a running stream as a device to erase any vestiges of supernatural residue which could be harmful to those who would greet her on her return. The mother met Sanapia as she approached the house and blessed her with the standard cedaring, fanning, and application of red paint. It was also during this blessing that the mother first addressed her daughter as *puhakut*.

Close friends of Sanapia's family had gathered at the house to congratulate Sanapia and to present her with gifts. The host family in turn gave gifts to those who came to honor Sanapia. Moccasins, blankets, shawls, groceries, money, dishes, yard goods, and horses were the items which were exchanged as gifts.

Within a few days after Sanapia returned from her four-day fasting, her family sponsored a peyote meeting. The main function of this particular meeting was to gather a large group of Comanches for the purpose of formally announcing Sanapia's newly acquired status. Also, it was thought that the prayers which would be offered for her during the meeting would aid her to more easily bear the burdens which her power imposed. The morning after the meeting was festive, consisting of more gift giving and feasting. However, at the same time that the beginning of Sanapia's new career was being celebrated, her mother's doctoring career had ended. The mother, though retaining all her powers, would cease to function as a doctor. Her withdrawal, however, was voluntary. If she had so desired, she could have continued her doctoring activities. This type of behavior would have been considered improper on the part of the mother, even though Sanapia would not be able to doctor until many years in the future, after menopause. Sanapia, basing her actions on those of her mother, will also cease doctoring once she has transmitted her skills and powers to her successor. In the nomadic Comanche culture, power could be transmitted from donor to recipient with no loss on the part of the donor. This is the case with the transmission of power from the mother to Sanapia.

In Sanapia's accounts of her mother's temper during the time of transmission of power, it would seem that the mother, who had reached a very advanced

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115 159 756 778 age, was tired of her profession and its rigors. She felt, perhaps, that she could excuse her inactivity in doctoring to the fact that her daughter possessed her powers. In other words, the mother's behavior could possibly have been based on circumstance, though Sanapia now interprets it as a law to be observed in transmission of power from a donor to a recipient. Sanapia is also in agreement that this type of rule does not make good sense. However, she explains that she does not understand many things which she does in her capacity as doctor. It is enough for Sanapia that her mother and uncle told her to keep the Medicine way, so she attempts to keep it, even if she does not understand certain aspects of the role she inherited. A practical aspect of what Sanapia considers one of the more senseless of her rules of behavior concerns the method she must follow in choosing a successor. As a woman, her first choice of successor would be her favorite daughter. However, at this point if she gave her Medicine to her daughter and then ceased doctoring herself, as she feels she must, it would be approximately twenty years before the Comanches would again have an eagle doctor in their midst, that is, until after the daughter passes menopause. During this time the special prerogatives of her Medicine way could probably be taken over by peyotism, as she has seen occur among the neighboring Kiowa. It is significant that she does consider herself in competition with peyote doctors.

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> Those Kiowa got this old man that doctors with peyote but he don't get people with twisted-face well . . . sometimes he don't get anybody well. That's what I heard. I even got some of those peoples that go to him . . . they come to me later on and I fix them up. Peyote is good but some things can't get well with it. I can do things that they can't do because I got that power. People learn that and then I see them . . . come to me. Us Comanches got two brothers that doctor with peyote too. That's all they use. There's a young man down at Walters but nobody pay him any attention. He just says he got power but I want to know where he got it from. Nobody knows that so . . . well, he's just a young man.

Dreams and Visions

115 159 756 787 [828] Shortly after Sanapia began her doctoring career, she had her first "real dream." She distinguishes between ordinary dreams, which she considers generally unimportant, and real dreams, to which she attributes enough importance that she will be motivated to certain kinds of behavior by them. The first dream experience occurred after she appealed to the eagle, while doctoring, to supply her with a special Medicine feather.

> This man, something like a man, came to where I was sleeping way in the night. He stood there and then held his hand to me. I just watch him, you know. I wasn't scared or nothing. Then he move his arm toward north and all at once I saw his arm go away from him. And next morning I said, "You all know what, I'm sure lonesome to see my uncle. He's up north around Geary. Let's go see him, if you all want to." Here we pack up and beat it down

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there north. And we was coming. We visit him about four days or five days. I said, "Uncle, we going home now." He said, "Why?" and I told him, "Just feel I get home and get my check." Then he went back and opened up his suitcase and said, "Come here," and I went. He had about twelve eagle feathers and he told me to take one I want best. I pulled out the best one in the bunch, and he said, "That's for you. Take it with you." And so that feather, what I dream about was given to me by my uncle. That's what that dream, really good dream, carried with it.

A recurring real dream comes to Sanapia which, in its essentials, is similar to the one just mentioned. The man appears to her at night and extends his hand to her. In the palm of his hand is a peyote button which covers the entire area of his palm, even fusing with his hand. He instructs Sanapia to take it from him. Her first several efforts are futile, for as she reaches for the peyote, it disappears. Finally, she is successful in taking the peyote from the man's hand. As soon as she grasps it in both hands, the peyote enters her hands and spreads a chill or tingling sensation through her hands and arms. Sanapia equates the tingling sensation with supernatural power.

Sanapia is not consistent in statements concerning her opinion of the identity of the man in her real dreams. At times she identifies him as the spirit of her maternal uncle, at times as "something that's helping," and at other times as the "peyote man." The identity of the man seems of little concern to her. The significant part of the dream to her is her magical acquisition of the peyote's power.

During peyote meetings she has had several experiences which she considers similar to her real dreams. The central theme of all these peyote experiences is the same: The peyote tells Sanapia that through its power she can accomplish anything she desires. The following account is typical. It also contains, once again, the peyote–hand motif. The gigantic size she attains relative to those around her is another recurring element in these peyote experiences.

And you know, that night, oh, I ate so much of that peyote, and I just feel good. Then, when I look, all the people sitting around in the tepee like that, everybody was way down right under my feet, and I was above them. I was sitting on top of them. That's how the peyote affect me in my body. And I said, "I wonder why they sitting down there and me sitting up here?" And I look this way and my boy was sitting here and I said, "Look at these peoples sitting down there and I'm sitting up here. Here's your head right here and you're sitting way down there too. I wonder why?" He said, "Mama, you eat too much of that peyote." And you know, I close my eyes and when I look at my hand, I had a big peyote there, as big as my hand. It was just sitting there, I said, "Look son, look what I got. Look at this peyote." He said, "Mama, I don't see anything there." But everytime I look, there it is. It was great peyote with green and with real pretty designs on it. And somehow it said, "Go ahead, use this and you could just do anything you want with it. You could just doctor anybody you want and they going to be alright. Right now you could doctor that one." But he didn't name anybody out. Come into my mind like that. "Right now you could just go out there and do as you please with this peyote. You infected with it so strong you could just raise a sick-bed man or woman or child. You could raise a dead man." It just came into my mind like that.

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Visitations from the Medicine Eagle

115 159 756 825 787 [533] Sanapia has had only two visitations from her supernatural eagle patron in her doctoring career. Both occurred during doctoring situations as a direct result of the singing of her Medicine song. Sanapia reports that her Medicine eagle looks like eagles she has seen in the wild except that it is much larger. She can feel her eagle's presence before she sees it. On the first occasion she felt a rush of air from its wings, and on the second it was a tingling sensation which announced the presence of the Medicine eagle. Sanapia states that when the eagle came to her, everything around her dissappeared with the resultant image: an eagle against a murky gray background. These visitations were very brief. During the eagle's apparition, it appeared to be hovering directly in front of her at a distance of about 4 or 5 feet. While the eagle was present, Sanapia trembled violently and perspired freely. She states that her heart beat very rapidly and she felt as if she was going to faint.

Contacts with the Supernatural

115 159 756 787 [775] Sanapia has provided herself with several contacts with the supernatural worlds. Since she cannot visit the other worlds, Sanapia must depend on these contacts to assist her in making her wishes known to the supernatural realms. Her comments concerning her Medicine song clearly identify the spirits of her mother and maternal uncle as her two major assistants. It should also be remembered that she considers her Medicine song as her most potent piece of doctoring paraphernalia. The spirit–man in her recurring real dreams is also a liaison or avenue of rapport between Sanapia and the supernatural, though in this case it is strictly a one-way phenomenon which is beyond Sanapia's control.

115 159 756 787 533 775 Sanapia's eagle comes to her only through the intercession of her mother and uncle via Sanapia's Medicine song. She associates her lack of courage in the final phase of her doctor training with her inability to call the eagle to her aid independently of her mother's and uncle's intercession. This is also the reason why Sanapia possesses only one Medicine song instead of the many which her mother and uncle possessed. In the final analysis, Sanapia can rarely act independently as a doctor; she must call on the assistance of her teachers. Therefore, instead of having many songs for summoning power, she has one. She must first call on her mother and uncle and then relate to them her wishes, which they, through their superior powers, actualize. Basically, then, Sanapia's real power is the control which she can exert over the powerful spirits of two *puhakuts*. However, this type of analysis is foreign to Sanapia. She prefers to think of herself as the pitiable supplicant.

115 159 756 787 755 Peyote is another important liaison with supernatural powers. The power she receives from peyote is the only power which she can manipulate entirely independently of the spirits of her mother and uncle. Still, the power of peyote is subordinate to the powers possessed by the spirits of her mother and uncle,

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and in her most difficult doctoring situations and in all her most criticial moments, it is to the spirits of her teachers that she turns for aid.

The Supernatural Universe

Sanapia's description of the supernatural universe is full of contradictory elements. This is not as great an obstacle to action as it may seem since she addresses each element individually as the situation demands. She has no need to attempt to grasp the entirety of this universe at once. Sanapia is able to select from her potpourri of supernaturalistic notions the ones which best suit a particular occasion.

She believes that living human beings share the earth with the ghosts, or malevolent spirits of deceased humans who, alive, led evil lives. The ghosts can enter into the world of men, but men cannot enter the world of ghosts except through death. Also, somewhere, neither in the plane of living men nor in the plane of ghost existence, is the realm of pure, unembodied supernatural power. Such entities as the sun, the earth, and the eagle are able to tap this power and thus possess it to a greater extent than can mortal men. Power can be acquired by men only through secondhand channels and never from its source. A mortal would be killed if exposed to pure power. The power, from its original source, is inexhaustible.

In yet another plane of existence are found the spirits of good men such as the disciples of Jesus and the spirits of Sanapia's mother and uncle. This realm is not quite like heaven, which is the abode of God and Jesus and the eternal home of those ordinary souls who have nothing to offer the world of the living, as do the spirits of Medicine men or the disciples of Jesus. Hell is somewhere deep in the earth. Sanapia believes that it is the special eternal home of evil white men. Her notions of the nature of hell follow the standard Christian concept.

Peyote is similar to the sun or the eagle in its ability to embody an extraordinary degree of supernatural power. However, unlike the sun or the eagle, peyote comes from the Christian God as a sign of his love for all Indian people. According to Sanapia, the sun has existed longer then the Christian God, and is therefore entirely self-sufficient.

Thus Sanapia can become more or less Christian, peyotist, or Plains shaman as varying situations present themselves. By not assigning a negative value to contradictory elements in her supernaturalistic universe and by oversimplifying the similarities, Sanapia possesses a flexibility which confounds any attempt to present a very cogent description of her "religion." If a key pervasive theme had to be chosen, it probably would be concerned with the idea of supernatural power and the desirability of its acquisition and control.

A Successor

At the present time Sanapia is beginning to consider the problem of a successor, for she feels that her doctoring career is rapidly approaching its final

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115 hours. There does not seem to be a very rigid or fixed system for the selection
159 of a successor. A Medicine woman should transmit her powers to a favorite
756 daughter, and a Medicine man, to an eldest son. However, if the first choice does
593 not respond or does not demonstrate the required personal qualities, he is eliminated.

Sanapia's daughter has shown little interest in acquiring her mother's powers. Sanapia feels that this is because her daughter is "too much like a white man." Sanapia's youngest son has already tried and failed in his attempt to acquire his mother's power because Sanapia did not believe in his sincerity. Thus, he is permanently eliminated. Sanapia's next choice was her daughter's adolescent son, though Sanapia fears that the mother's influence will eventually rule him out as a potential successor.

During the final stages of my research with Sanapia, a new potential successor presented himself—Sanapia's eldest son. She had not even considered him in her search for a successor because of his aversion for all those things which are associated with traditionalist Comanche society. Recently, however, in his late forties, he has begun to take a greater interest in peyotism, for example, and in acquiring from his mother a more thorough command of the Comanche language. He also embodies all those personal traits which Sanapia feels a doctor should possess.

> You know that oldest boy of mine down at Lawton? He sure is a good one. He never say anthing out of the way about anybody. He's just so happy right now. And everytime I go down there, I see somebody at his house. He takes them in to help them along some. He gives them his last dollar. He sure likes to help people out. And he treats me real good too. Everybody seem to like him. I talk to him about my doctoring ways and he said that he would think about it and tell me later on sometime.

115 Sanapia can transmit her knowledge of medicines or actually dispense
159 medicines to anyone for a fee; however, the transmission of power, since it is
756 received as a gift, must be given as a gift. Once again, this follows from Sanapia's
778 feeling that power cannot actually be owned by an individual. A person may acquire the knowledge required to manipulate power to a certain degree; however, this is the only sense in which he actually owns it. When a *puhakut* dies, the power he "possesses" does not die with him but once again becomes a free, unattached, and available agent to the next man or woman who has the ability to control or manipulate it. To Sanapia, man is subordinate to supernatural power. It would be illogical to her to conceive of a weaker agent controlling a stronger agent. Power can temporarily enter a mortal and become one with him, but it is still in the position of ultimate control. She cites the many tabus which a *puhakut* must observe, and mentions that there are no restrictions placed on the power.

She will state that power increases through time. A further probing of this notion reveals that what she means is that a *puhakut*, through time and experience, can become more efficient in manipulating power. Sanapia conceives of supernatural power as a static phenomenon. Once it is established, it does not decrease or increase of its own accord.

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The tabus which are attached to supernatural power are a major reason that a doctor may experience difficulty in his attempt to find a successor. Wallace and Hoebel (1952:165) mention this in their discussion of Comanche supernaturalism:

> Such reluctance to assume power, or particular powers, was common among the Comanches. Powers were always accompanied by tabus; tabus were onerous restrictions on the freedom of action that a Comanche male cherished. The result was an ambivalent attitude toward the possession of Medicine.

Sanapia, being aware of this, is planning to delete certain tabus from her Medicine way in order to make the acquisition of her powers more palatable to a twentieth-century Comanche. Of course, the absence of certain tabus also indicates the absence of the concomitant degree of power. Her successor will not be burdened with the food and eating tabus which Sanapia finds so cumbersome. He will also not have to be bothered with the tabu forbidding the making of direct requests. These deletions are major concessions for Sanapia, but ones which she feels are necessary if her tradition is to continue.

Sanapia's mother modified her Medicine way before transmitting it to Sanapia for much the same reasons that Sanapia is now being compelled to consider. An element which occurred in her mother's modifications, though not in Sanapia's, was the deletion of certain powers because of their lack of contemporary function. Her mother possessed many medicines and songs which were associated with the role of midwife. She told Sanapia that the delivering of infants would be taken over by white doctors in the future and, therefore, there was no reason for Sanapia to learn the skill or to be compelled to observe the tabus associated with it. To both Sanapia and her mother the primary function of an eagle doctor is his ability to cure ghost sickness[2]. The deletions in tabus and power made by Sanapia and her mother have not infringed on this specific power.

Sanapia believes that her doctoring tradition will ultimately die as the Comanches become more acculturated. She states that *puhakuts* will cease to exist when the Comanches have no more need for them. Sanapia's sensitivity, concern with function, and general pragmatic instincts make her a very sensitive barometer of the manner in which culture change is viewed and handled by a traditionally oriented Comanche. Since her opinion of herself is bound by supernatural sanctions, and not merely by elusive value structure, her reaction to culture change is much more dramatic.

Attitudes about Sanapia

The ways in which Comanches of both northern and southern affiliation and members of neighboring tribes react to Sanapia as a personality are many and

[2] "Ghost sickness," "twisted face," and "crooked mouth" are names which the Comanches, as well as other southern Plains tribes, give to a condition of facial hemiplegia, usually with concomitantly occurring constrictions of the hands and arms, which is said to result from ghost contact.

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115 varied. Because of her supernatural powers and mercurial temperament, a certain
159 aloofness marks her relationship even with her friends. Only two old women,
157 women who grew up with Sanapia, seem to be able to overcome this barrier.
571 This aloofness is as much instigated by Sanapia as it is a reaction of others based on fear, or at least uneasiness in her presence.

Some Comanches exhibit a type of reaction to Sanapia which is interpreted by other Comanches as jealousy. Sanapia has a position and a skill which is denied to the majority of Comanches. Many of the younger and more acculturated though sympathetic Comanches consider her a likeable but eccentric old woman. She is considered ridiculous by many of the southern Comanches. Many Comanches, as well as neighboring Kiowas and Apaches, continue to represent her as sexually promiscuous, alcoholic, violent, and prone to excessive gambling. However, in all these cases her traditionalism and conservative Comanche beliefs are acknowledged, though they may be interpreted positively or negatively, depending on who is presenting the opinion.

A Kiowa woman offered the following opinion:

> She sure is a good old woman . . . pretty for an old woman too. I seen you with her bunch a lot so I guess you know what she is . . . what she does. I took my niece up to her once and she cared for her and got her well in a few days. I tell other people about how she took care of my little girl and they might go to see her if they get sick bad or if their family might get sick.

Another informant was less charitable in his evaluation:

> I don't know much about it. I've heard some of my people talking about an old woman who lives south from here. They say she can curse you if she wants to and make you sick. It's that woman you mention too. She supposed to be a bad one, but I never seen her. I don't believe that suff about curses myself but a lot of people . . . Indian people . . . do. You better watch out. They say she can do it.

Sanapia's Self-Concept

115 Sanapia is aware that some people laugh at her, and she does as much
159 as she can to eliminate this possibility, for she is an exceedingly proud woman.
156 Types of behavior which ostentatiously identify her as a *puhakut*, such as wearing a black kerchief or vocally demanding that others observe her tabu restrictions, are avoided by her for fear that others will think that she is "just a crazy old Indian."

Sanapia's opinion of herself remains quite high in spite of the pressures
115 that surround her. In the following account she describes how she brought a dead
159 niece back to life:
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755 I was doctoring my niece one time . . . the doctor gave up on her. She had cancer and liver. So the doctor, white doctor, gave up. They dismissed her from the Indian hospital and she went home. Somebody came to our house that after-

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noon and told us that L——— was dying. The doctor gave up. I told my husband, "Let's go see her." And we beat it down there and it was about five o'clock, late that afternoon. It was cold. When we got there she was just lying on her back like that . . . nobody was in the house except her. Her husband was gone and her children were all gone. She was white as a sheet. Her face was just white and her lips were blue. She didn't even notice me come in. I wake her up and said, "Are you sleeping? What's the matter with you?" She said, "I'm dying . . . going to die tonight. That's what the doctor told me. They dismissed me from the hospital. I'm going to die either tonight or tomorrow . . . just any day. Could you help me?" That's what she said. And I told J———, "You go get your brothers. I'll get her out of it . . . that's nothing. That cancer ain't nothing to me." And he beat it down there to his brothers and they come in right after dark. That night we soaked that deer hide . . . soaked it in water till it could get soft and they put it on the drum. And right there in the middle of town . . . she got a home in the middle of town and a lot of white people living all around her house. So I said, "Let's have this peyote meeting for her tonight . . . drum all night. Let me fix her up. She be alright." And so that night we had a drumming right there in the middle of town. And she was worse the next morning. I said, "This is too noisy. I don't like to doctor anybody in noisy place. Let's take her home." So we load her up and brought her down here to our place. That night we had another peyote meeting inside of the house and it was just pouring down rain and we had the meeting for her. Took that peyote and said, "Our fathers, way back in years . . . our grandfathers took this medicine, and they said that whenever anybody sick like that you just take this and chew it and then put it in your hands and let her swallow it . . . give her four at the start." And I done that. I prayed and I talked to that peyote just like I'm talking to you. I said, "If you don't get her well, I don't want you. If you not nothing, if you ain't got power, I don't want to use you anymore." God made me in this world and he gave me this power just like when he was here on land. Jesus went around blessing people and healing the sick and everything like that and I believe that I got the power in my hands. I believe I could get her well. So that night we had a peyote meeting and the second night we had another one and the fourth night . . . the fourth night she died. She just went out. She was blue . . . fingernails were blue and her lips turn blue. I told them, "Take that drum hide out." And they took it, rinse it out, squeeze it, and I said, "Give it to me." And I put it on her head. I rub her face with it, and four times I done that to her and then I sing my Medicine song. When anybodys dying and I doctor them that's the only time I sing that special song I got. So I said, "You all carry her and put her on my bed," and they carried her. I said, "You all stay out there in the front room." And they all stayed out there and it was still pouring rain. Everybody get out. It was raining out there and the wind was howling around. I sing this song and I fan her and I doctor her . . . give her that medicine. I don't know how many times I give her that. And after awhile she open her eyes and said, "I'm sure thirsty." And after that she got alright.

Sanapia considers herself a slightly outmoded necessity in Comanche society. She knows that she represents an extremely ancient Comanche institution, and it is in that knowledge that her feeling of uniqueness rests; at the same time she can foresee the final e...l of her tradition. Many times, as we sat watching automobiles moving along a highway or observed the skyscrapers in Oklahoma City and Wichita, she would speak of the incongruity of herself and the twentieth-century world in which she lives.

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I just can't think how it came this way. Look at them cars. I remember when I never seen them before. And all those white peoples walking along, and those big buildings all around here. I don't like it here. My grandmother said this way would come and now here I am and she died long time back in years. Maybe I should be with her now because my way is getting no good up to today. Maybe I should be dead too. Even my own kids growing up like white peoples, and they think I'm just a funny old woman. I know they do! But I ain't got too many more years to go yet. And here, you, a white person, asking me all those old ways and my kids go around here and there and don't even talk to me about those things. It sure is funny, ain't it?

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Sanapia, 1969.

The pervasive influence of acculturation is a fact which cannot be skirted, 177
however, and perhaps it is at the core of the inconsistencies between Sanapia and
the ethnographers of the early 1930s. Sanapia is particularly immediately affected 756
by the changes wrought by acculturation and change because of the nature of her 159
role. The notion of her "place" in Comanche society, plus the rigidly bound manner 177
in which her behavior is directed by certain supernatural sanctions, forces her to 554
react to change piecemeal. A Comanche not so bound as Sanapia to certain pre-

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159 scribed modes of behavior and thought can ebb and flow with the stimuli of
756 acculturation. He can bend, withdraw, aggress, and withdraw again, while retain-
177 ing a homogeneous and integrated self-concept. Sanapia, however, is relatively
554 rigid and must react immediately lest her role structure be shattered.

Sanapia Prevails

159 To Sanapia, she is an eagle doctor first and foremost. Her whole life is
756 bound in this role; therefore, its protection is extremely dear to her. Sanapia
177 lives with compromise, rationalization, and intellectualization. Because of her
[157] functionalistic and pragmatic temperament, she must defend an institution which to her at times has little meaning in its particulars. Each new realization of acculturative changes stimulates her to attempt to fit this newly acquired realization into a nonantagonistic relationship to her role as Medicine woman. She knows that she must meet the threats of culture change directly if her institution is to continue to have meaning for Comanches who are reacting to acculturation.

In this manner she has incorporated elements and sentiments of Christianity and organized peyotism into her own religious structure in an attempt at compatibility with the religious atmosphere of her life situation. By accepting the basic tenets of Christianity and organized peyotism, she has also provided herself with further sources of supernatural powers. Sanapia has defined illness into "white" and "Indian" categories, thereby retaining her position in the overall medical structure of both cultures. She has borrowed words and concepts from the mass media to elaborate her views of certain aspects of physiology, health, and medicine. These are but a few examples. Sanapia, while anchoring her sentiments and loyalties in a traditional Comanche setting, has extended herself, through her concern with her profession, into the white culture.

Perhaps the most significant points this study has illustrated are the psychotherapeutic function which Sanapia possesses in contemporary Comanche
775 culture and the psychological function of ghost sickness. Although it cannot be
753 absolutely substantiated, it would appear that ghost sickness, in its present form,
177 is a new arrival in Comanche society. Ghost sickness can be considered, in most cases, a conversion reaction whose negative emotional basis is founded in the cultural and personal confusion and tension produced by the increasingly efficient success of acculturation in corroding the traditional basis of Comanche
159 society. It then appears that Sanapia is the curer of a dynamic and functional
756 human disorder. She is not a specialist in the treatment of broken bones or gun-
177 shot wounds like a buffalo doctor, nor of rattlesnake bites, like a snake doctor; she is the curer of an illness which is psychodynamic in nature. As her people change, ghost sickness will no doubt change, and Sanapia and successive eagle doctors' interpretation of ghost sickness will also change. Sanapia treats the individual rather than a specific static human affliction; she is essentially a native psychiatrist. This dynamic flexibility has enable Comanche eagle doctors to exist long after the other varieties of Comanche native doctors have had their function usurped by white doctors during the ongoing process of acculturation.